



THE PHYSICIAN'S *Bookshelf*

DRUGS OF CHOICE—1958-1959—Edited by Walter Modell, M.D., Associate Professor of Pharmacology, Cornell University Medical College. C. V. Mosby Company, St. Louis, Mo., 1958. 931 pages, \$12.75.

The purpose of this book as stated in the Preface is to provide "a practical guide to the selection of the best drug for a particular therapeutic problem." With this in view, an expert in each particular field of therapeutics has been chosen as author of each chapter. Certain of the authors have accomplished this purpose in splendid manner, others have dealt in generalities and thus ignored the book's stated purpose, while still others have written as for a textbook of pharmacology. In this reviewer's opinion, the chapters most nearly accomplishing the purpose are "Choice of an Anticonvulsant" by Tracy Jackson Putnam, "Choice of an Antiemetic Agent," "Choice of Vasoconstrictor Drugs for Hypotension and Shock" and "Choice of Vasodilator Drugs for the Treatment of Peripheral Vascular Disturbances" by John H. Moyer, "Choice of an Agent for Disturbances in Equilibrium" by Paul K. Smith, "Choice of Drugs in the Treatment of Hypertension" by Sibley W. Hoobler, and "Choice of Drugs for Cancer and Allied Diseases" by David A. Karnofsky. That portion of the chapter on "The Choice of an Anesthetic" related to local anesthetics, by Joseph F. Artusio, Jr. should also be mentioned in this regard.

Failing in the purpose to guide the physician in "selection of the best drug for a particular therapeutic problem" but providing excellent discussions of physiological, pathological and pharmacological principles on which treatment is to be based are the chapters on "The Choice of Agents to Adjust and Maintain Internal Homeostasis" by Paul L. McLain and Frederick R. Franke, "Choice of a Diuretic" and "Choice of Drugs for Diseases of the Heart" by Walter Modell, "The Choice of Drugs for Stimulation of Mental and Physical Activity" by Robert G. Heath and Donald D. Lathrop, "The Choice of a Stimulant to Vital Medullary Centers" by McKee Cattell, "The Choice of Drugs for the Relief of Pain" by John J. Bonica, "The Choice of Sedatives and Tranquillizers" by Paul H. Hoch and "The Choice of a Hypnotic" by Louis Lasagna. It is unfortunate that so outstanding an authority on "The Choice of an Anti-Infective Agent" as Chester S. Keefer should also have dealt so much in generalities and pharmacological descriptions rather than drawing upon his vast experience for specific illustrations. The doctor who needs the type of information which the book was intended to give does not wish to read or pay for pages devoted to the nature of disease, physiological processes and physical or surgical treatment (see page 224) in this book, when he has this information already available in other books on his shelf.

"The Choice of Drugs for Nutritional Disorders" by William B. Dean has been filled with a great deal of important information on vitamins but entirely overlooks the fact that amino acids, carbohydrates, fats and minerals are still

poorly understood as nutritional factors by many practitioners. Paragraph 3 on page 102 should be read periodically by every one concerned with nutrition.

The editor Walter Modell, has written an excellent chapter on "Principles of the Choice of Drugs," well worth the time of pharmacologists as well as practitioners, with portions that should be quoted to patients, for example, "The newspapers, too, especially the Sunday supplements, have a special passion for disclosing undigested information on drugs which have a suggestive design of pharmacological action and for presenting them forthwith as having unquestioned clinical utility." For those who think that the laboratory studies are useless or give misleading information it would be enlightening to read page 22.

Alan K. Done, in "The Choice of Drugs for Children" has done little to help the physician select "the best drug for a particular therapeutic problem" but has given excellent directions for dosage for children and points out "that children are not simply miniature adults with respect to reaction to disease or response to drugs."

At the end of each chapter, with the exception of the first two, is a Drug Index, which lists most drugs related to the chapter by trade name, manufacturer and non-proprietary name. Dosage forms and methods of administration are also included. Since now nearly every physician receives an annual copy of "PDR" which includes this information and more, the "Drug Index" could well be omitted and thus reduce the cost, without reducing the value of this book.

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DIABETES AS A WAY OF LIFE—T. S. Danowsky, M.D., Renziehausen Professor of Research Medicine, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine; Senior Staff Physician at Presbyterian-Woman's, Children's, Elizabeth Steel Magee, and Shadyside Hospitals of Pittsburgh; Consultant in Metabolism, Oakland Veteran's Administration Hospital, Pittsburgh. Coward-McCann, Inc., New York. 177 pages, \$3.50.

This little book offers a frank and factual presentation of the subject to the diabetic patient. The often neglected social aspects of the disease are discussed. An outline for the hostess of the diabetic guest is offered and a copy of these few pages might be welcomed. There is relatively little on actual insulin adjustment, although the use of Protamine Zinc Insulin/Regular Insulin mixtures is discussed. The strictness of control is left to the physician. One wonders about an average 150-pound male requiring 2700 calories a day. Diet by the food exchange method is apparently preferred, but there is little on menu planning. Physical inactivity "making diabetes worse" might be confusing at first glance, although the effect is spelled out later. There is a question and answer section at the end. In general, this is a very good book and highly recommended for the diabetic patient of average or better intelligence.